



RUSSELL LYNES, Managing Editor of *Harper's Magazine*, is the author of two books, *Snobs*, and *Guests*, and of many essays on taste and the arts, among them the now famous "Highbrow, Lowbrow, Middlebrow."

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THE TASTEMAKERS

by Russell Lynes

"Taste," says the author of this book, "is our personal pleasure, our private dilemma and our public façade." *The Tastemakers* is the lively story of the people and pressures that have shaped American taste for the last dozen decades. Mr. Lynes recreates (inside and out) our homes and those of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents; and against this sometimes ludicrous, sometimes charming backdrop, he reanimates—with all their original intensity and excitement—the battles of taste that account for our likes and dislikes today.

Who, today, are the architects, designers, messiahs, merchants and artists who try to shape our taste? How do they go about it? What have they done—with the rise of suburbs, movies, automobiles and corporations—to make us the taste consumers we are? Today's answers are illuminated by a sprightly journey through the past.

What did the sudden production of factory-made flowered carpets, fancy chairs at a dollar apiece, and wallpapers do to "household refinement" in the 1830's? In those days, museums showed two-headed calves along with mastodon bones and works of art—such were the rallying points of culture. Who bought paintings in the 1840's and 1850's? How

(Continued on back flap)

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A lively and unconventional history of American taste,—including the fascinating stories of those who have tried to shape it—architects, designers, merchants, critics, geniuses and frauds, messiahs and men of art.

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